

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T STATE 003264

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT SANA 0015 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JAN 02.

QUOTE S E C R E T SANA 015

NODIS

E.O. 11652/ XGDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF YAR CHIEF OF STATE HAMDI

1. EMBASSY SANA IS NOW PREPARED TO
GO ON RECORD AS SAYING THAT FORMER YAR PRESIDENT HAMDI WAS
KILLED BY FELLOW OFFICERS IN COUP. PRESENT CHIEF OF STATE
AL-GHASHMI CONNIVED IN DEATH, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN HIS
HOUSE FOLLOWING LUNCH IN HONOR OF UNWITTING PRIME MINISTER.
FRENCH GIRLS KILLED LATER IN THEIR HOUSE. SLAIN PRESIDENT AND
HIS BROTHER PHOTOGRAPHED NEXT TO STRIPPED GIRLS TO BLACKEN
REPUTATIONS, CONFUSE ISSUES.

2. KILLERS WERE LT. COLONEL ALI ABDALLAH SALAH, COMMANDER OF
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MAJD BRIGADE IN AIZ AND LT. COLONEL AHMAD FARRAJ, COMMANDER
OF 6TH ARMORED BRIGADE IN SANA AND LT. COL. HAMUD QATINA, RESERVE
FORCE COMMANDER. IN SOME STORIES LAST TWO ARE REPLACED BY SOME
OTHER NAMES,
PARTICULARLY CAPT MOHAMMED AL-ANSI, GHASHMI'S AIDE DE CAMP,
BUT ALI ABDALLAH SALAH REMAINS CONSTANT IN STORY WHICH NOW COMMONLY
ALLEGED INSANA. SO DOES GENERAL OUTLINES OF ABOVE SCENARIO.

3. MOTIVE WAS BELIEVEIN HAMDI'S WAXING RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AND WANING ONE WITH SAUDIS. GHASHMI HAS BEEN SAYING THAT HAMDI PLANS FOR SOUTH INCLUDED MILITARY COOPERATION WHICH, IT MAY BE SURMISED, WOULD HAVE JEOPARDIZED NOT ONLY POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF COUNTRY BUT ALSO JOBS AND COMMANDS.

4. QUESTION OF SAUDI COMPLICITY IS LESS CLEAR TO US. WE HAVE NO RPT NO EVIDENCE FOR THIS EXCEPT FOR GOOD REPORTS BEFORE THE KILLINGS THAT SULTAN AND SUDAIRIS DISLIKED AND DISTRUSTED HAMDI. (WE THOUGHT AT TIME, DEPENDING ON YEMENI SOURCES, THAT SULTAN WAS NEVERTHELESS COMING TO TERMS WITH HAMDI.) THERE ARE OTHER REPORTS OF SAUDI COMPLICITY, OF COURSE, COMING FROM YEMENI SOURCES AFTER THE DEATH. IN FACT, YEMENIS OF ALL POLITICAL STRIPES NOW CALIM THAT SAUDIS ORDERED AND PAID FOR DEATH. WE GIVE SOME WEIGHT TO THESE REPORTS, ESPECIALLY THREE MONTHS AFTER DEATH. IN COUNTRY WHERE WORD OF MOUTH IS MOST USED FORM OF COMMUNICATION AND UNANIMITY IS RARE, SUCH REPORTS ARE NOT TO BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND.

5. WE ARE AWARE OF SAUDI MINDEF SULTAN'S SENSITIVITY TO US INQUIRIES INTO DEATH. SINGLE ADDRESSEE AND LIMITS ON DISTRIBUTION THIS MESSAGE REFLECT THIS CONCERN. NEVERTHELESS, BELIEVE THESE VIEWS SHOULD BE MATTTTER OF RECORD.

SCOTES

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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